ASHE OF PURGATORY

煉獄のアーシ

STORY ENDOU TATSUYA
ARTWORK ENDOU TATSUYA

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ASHE OF PURGATORY
PEOPLE FEAR THE UNKNOWN...
FEAR IS WHAT INVITES PEOPLE INTO DESPAIR...
ASHE IN PURGATORY
A GOTHIC WITCH TRIAL FANTASY
EN DOU TAI SUWA
THE TALENT BEHIND "ISTA" AND "GEKKA BIJIN" MAKES A RETURN APPEARANCE WITH A NEW ONE-SHOT!

THE NEMI HIGH COURTS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THIS WAS A DEED DONE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE BLACK MAGICAL ARTS!
MADNESS! JUDGMENT...!!
KILL HER!
KILL HER!
SHE SHALL BE EXECUTED BY BURNING!!
THE ACCUSED, ASHE HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE A 'WITCH'...!!
THIS IS...

A STORY OF AN AGE WHERE 'WITCH HUNTING' IS REQUIRED BY SOCIETY...
ARE YOU LADIES OKAY?
OH DEAR RECENTLY THE AMOUNT OF BRIGANDS AROUND HAS RISEN—
AGH!!
GEEZ, JUST STOP COMING HERE!

NOW LET'S GO! BROKKEN BROOK IS ONLY A LITTLE FURTHER AHEAD!
WE ARE THE SAINT BENEZE HOSPITAL KNIGHTS, A GATHERING OF MONKS WHO CARRY SWORDS.
NO NEED TO WORRY, WE'LL ENSURE YOU ALL REACH TOWN SAFE AND SOUND!
SERVING AS PROTECTION FOR PILGRIMS WHO ARE INJURED AND SICK AS WELL AS GIVING THEM MEDICAL CARE IS WHAT WE DO.
ALTHOUGH THERE AREN'T THAT MANY BELIEVERS AROUND NOW...
AH, SORRY
DON'T GET SO CLOSE TO US WITH THOSE BLOOD STAINS ON YOUR CLOTHES REPULSIVE!

WE'RE GOING TO GO AHEAD TO THE INN AND TRAINING GROUNDS. YOU JUST MAKE SURE TO GO SHOPPING, BEL.
OKAY.
WELL THAT'S FINE. WITH THIS WE CAN AT LEAST GET FOOD TO EAT
OH NOT THE PILGRIMS AGAIN
IF YOU GET CLOSE TO THEM YOU'RE BOUND TO GET SICK
THEY'RE SO DIRTY
KEH PLEBIANS
AND THERE AREN'T MANY PEOPLE IN CITIES WHO LIKE US MUCH EITHER.

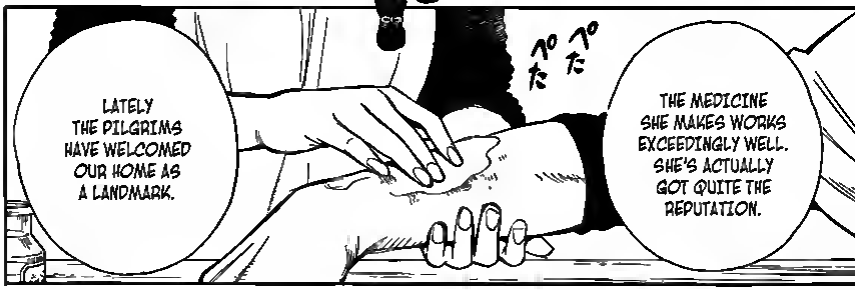
UMM...
THAT JUST LEAVES WHEAT FLOUR AND
HEY! WAIT DAMMIT!
I WONDER IF THEY'RE WITCH HUNTING IN THIS TOWN TOO...
THERE ARE A LOT OF INQUISITION GUARDS AROUND...
WHOA! IS IT A FIGHT?!
HEH - I DON'T CARE MUCH FOR THOSE EYES OF YOURS...

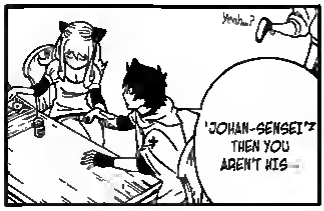
YOU DO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION YOU'RE IN RIGHT?
IF YOU WANT TO REMAIN FREE THEN YOU NEED TO PAY ALL OF YOUR TAXES TO THE CHURCH!!
ENTS
A GIRL?
CRASH
SAY SOMETHING DAMMIT!
STAND STILL!
SFFT
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
AH! IDIOT!

THAT'S RIGHT... AND GOD WITH ALL OF HIS BENEVOLENCE IS WILLING TO FORGIVE THE LOT OF YOU... IF YOU GO HOME NOW AND LEAVE THINGS AS IS.
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
HOOOT!!
BRO, CHECK OUT HIS CLOTHES! HE'S A KNIGHT OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDER...
SSSS

THANK YOU
くるっ
UM..
DAMN YOU STRANGER!
THIS GIRL...
HER HAIR WAS ON FIRE, AND SHE DIDN'T EVEN BAT AN EYELASH.
EHZ OH YEAH.
AH, FIGURES AS MUCH
I'm wearing these.
SEE YOU.
AH,
BY THE WAY I'M SORRY FOR CUTTING YOUR HAIR LIKE THAT... BEING A GIRL AND ALL
A CLINIC..?
ナデナデ

WE HAVE TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING AS A TOKEN OF THANKS...
SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED!
IT'S FINE... I just do what come naturally.
OH, YOU'VE RETURNED HOME ASHE..
Oh my
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HAIR?
AND IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT ME GETTING TREATMENT, I CAN DO SO AT THE TRAINING IN...
UM.. THIS'LL BE FINE, REALLY! I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY
SIT.
IS THIS YOUR HOME?


LATELY THE PILGRIMS HAVE WELCOMED OUR HOME AS A LANDMARK.
THE MEDICINE SHE MAKES WORKS EXCEEDINGLY WELL. SHE'S ACTUALLY GOT QUITE THE REPUTATION.


Yeah...?
'JOHAN-SENSEI'? THEN YOU AREN'T HIS...

All done.
HE'S JUST MY FOSTER PARENT.

JOHAN-SENSEI... OVER THERE
Ooh.
Sensei! My arm is!
THE CHURCH DOESN'T FIND THIS AMUSING HOWEVER...
AND I'M SURE THEY'VE BEEN SENDING PEOPLE TO ATTACK ASHE...

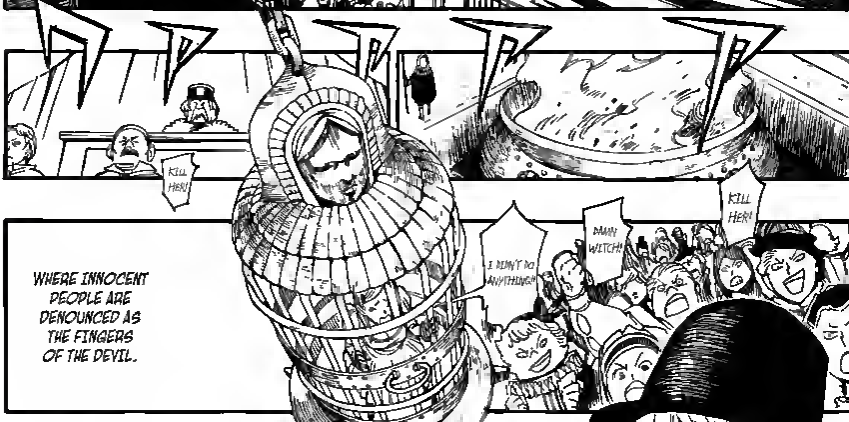
.....
IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME..
I'M SURE IT'LL BE NOTHING BUT TROUBLE FOR YOU...
DO YOU REALLY WANT A GUY LIKE ME COMING IN AND OUT OF THIS PLACE?
Oh my, a killer is here in the clinic
EH...?
IF THE FESTERING DOESN'T STOP THEN COME BACK TOMORROW
NO, THAT'S NOT IT..
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO THAT'S FINE
I'M A SACRED KNIGHT OF BENEZE, BEL TEINBUREN!
THANKS FOR THE FOOD AND FIXING THE INJURY ON MY ARM! I'LL BE BACK TOMORROW!
OOH?!
THE PAIN IS COMPLETELY GONE!
Awesome!
Is this magic?

SHE'S A LITTLE STRANGE, BUT I'M SURE SHE'S A GOOD PERSON!
NOW ALL THAT'S LEFT IS SECRETLY ESCORTING THOSE OLD LADY PILGRIMS SAFELY..
AH!! I FORGOT TO GO SHOPPING!!
OLD MAN, I'D LIKE AN APPLE!
HUH?
ASHE...
WELL WELL! OF COURSE! ANYONE FROM TALTON-SAN'S PLACE IS WELCOME.
I WAS THINKING THAT WE COULD BRING ALL OF THE PILGRIMS TO YOUR CLINIC FROM NOW ON!
You're gonna go out that mighty?
That's foolish.
I'LL BUY ALL OF YOUR APPLES.
I-I DO...?
YOU GOT SOME CASH?
So you showed up huh?

DO YOU THINK YOU COULD BACK AWAY ABOUT 10 CM?
Ah
SIS!!
I GET IT! BUT THIS IS THE ONLY ONE I HAVE... I DO WASH IT ON OCCASION.
THOSE WHITE CLOTHES THAT YOU WEAR SEEM TO ATTRACT ALL SORTS OF ATTENTION
EVERYONE AT THE HOSPITAL WEARS BLACK SO THAT BLOOD AND DIRT DON'T SHOW UP SO EASILY
DOESN'T BOTHER ME
I'M SORT OF SORRY... I GUESS IT'D BE BETTER IF WE WEREN'T TRAVELING TOGETHER...
OKAY!
KEEP IT A SECRET FROM JOHAN-SENSEI, OR HE'LL GET ANGRY
You're giving this to me?
THANKS FOR COMING BEFORE WITH THE FREE MEDICATION!
Ah, so you do have one.
WELP, I GUESS I'LL SEE YOU LATER TOO, SISTER EXPRESSIONLESS!
SEE YOU SOON SISTER EXPRESSION-LESS!!
Bye bye!

ひょい。
I'LL HELP!
WAH!
YOU SURE HAVE A LOT OF FREE TIME...
Gathering medicinal herbs today?
WELL, IT'S JUST AS LONG AS THE PILGRIMS ARE IN TOWN
AH LOOK! THERE ARE WHITETHORNS GROWING SPORADICALLY ALL OVER HERE!
THE MAY FESTIVAL WILL BE SOON THEN, HUH?
OH! IN THE SOUTH THERE IS A FESTIVAL KNOWN AS MAY'S QUEEN. ON THE DAY OF THE FESTIVAL, ONE GIRL IN THE TOWN IS CHOSEN TO WEAR A DECORATIVE CROWN OF FLOWERS.
I KNOW.
THEY USED TO DO THAT IN THE VILLAGE I LIVED IN A WHILE BACK.
INADVERTENTLY AT THAT TIME
THE EYES SHE HAD WERE ODD... AT AN AGE BEYOND HER YEARS...GAZING AT SOMETHING FAR AWAY.

YOU CERTAINLY ARE CUTE...
QUEEN ASHE.
A FEELING UNBECOMING FOR A MONK LIKE MYSELF—
FORCEFULLY AND SILENTLY HELP ME DOWN...
ふるふる
UPON SEEING THIS I COULDN'T HELP BUT FEEL A SLIGHT TINGE OF SADNESS.
HEHE.
I HOPE WE GET TO STAY IN TOWN LONG ENOUGH FOR THE FESTIVAL
LIKE A HEATHEN BRIGAND.
WHAT ARE YOU LOAFING AROUND FOR?!
AH! THERE YOU ARE BEL!!
R—REALLY?
BROKKEN BROOK DOESN'T HAVE A FESTIVAL
YOU HAVE TO COME TOO!!
THE CHURCH IS DEPENDING ON US AS GUARDS!!
THERE IS A FESTIVAL, WHATEVER IT IS—



WHERE INNOCENT PEOPLE ARE DENOUNCED AS THE FINGERS OF THE DEVIL.

THE CIVILIANS WHOSE ANXIETIES AND DISSATISFACTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN BUILT UP OVER TIME IS RELEASED

CLAIMED BY THE CHURCH.
DEATH BY FIRE!!
THE SENTENCE IS...
THE ONE BEING EXECUTED HAS ALL OF THEIR THINGS...
STOOOP!!!
PLEASE STOP THIS!!
ガコン
THIS ISN'T ENOUGH!
IF WE HAVE TO CONTINUE TO SETTLE FOR THE SLIM PICKINGS WE'RE GETTING FROM THESE PLEBEIANS THEN MY MONETARY STANDINGS WILL NEVER RISE!
AH...
IF THE BISHOP WOULD STOP USING SUCH HEAVY HANDED TACTICS PERHAPS THIS WOULDN'T HAPPEN...

TELL THIS TO THE GUARDS OF THE INQUISITION...
FOR NOW ON THEY ARE TO TAKE A WIDER AND MUCH MORE AGGRESSIVE STANCE...

WHEN I SAW THAT FIRE BURNING MY PAIN RETURNED...
SORRY TO START YOUR MORNING OFF LIKE THIS ASHE...
MAAN, BUT LAST NIGHT'S FESTIVAL SURE WAS SOMETHING WASN'T IT JOHAN-SENSEI?
AH.. YES
YEAH..
You can see this kind of thing in any city ever :/
HOW SURPRISING... YOU HAVEN'T GOTTEN USED TO THAT YET?
ぐるる
THOSE WITCHES ALWAYS END UP BEING THE YOUNG LASSES DON'T THEY?

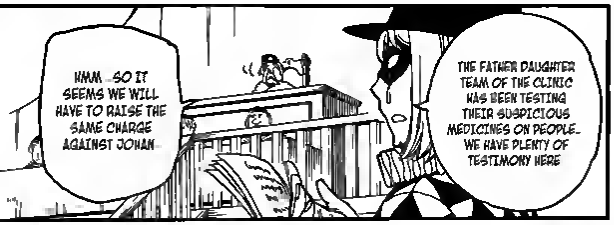
I'M AN ORPHAN RAISED BY THE MONASTERY...
THE ONLY THING I'M GOOD AT IS SWINGING A SWORD, SO I FIGURED BECOMING A PART OF THE MILITARY ORDER WAS THE OBVIOUS THING TO DO...
I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE...
AND SOMEONE LIKE ME WHO DOESN'T KNOW MUCH MAY NOT HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO DISCERN BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL BUT...
IT JUST SEEMS...
SO SAD...
YOUR WOUNDS AREN'T SERIOUS.
THIS IS A PAIN...
THAT MEDICINE CANNOT HEAL...
I'M SORRY.
I SEE... I SUPPOSE THAT RATHER THAN COMING HERE I SHOULD GO TO A CONFESSIONAL HUH?
This is nothing you have to apologize for.
BUT YOU...

WILL BE LEAVING THIS CITY TOMORROW
THE PILGRIMS...
INCREDIBLY KIND AND SOFT HEARTED.
FOR JUST A LITTLE BIT SHE SEEMED LIKE THE HOLY MOTHER...
BE ABLE TO SEE YOU AGAIN?
WILL I...
BUT OF COURSE IF IT'S TOO MUCH TROUBLE...
IT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME
WOULD IT BE OKAY FOR ME TO VISIT THIS CITY... THIS CLINIC AGAIN?
IF THIS BURN HURTS AGAIN...

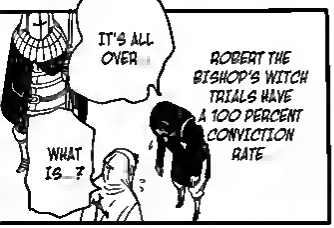
BEFORE I GO, I SHOULD THANK YOU SOMEHOW...
YEAH...
I'LL DEFINITELY COME TO SEE YOU AGAIN.
I'VE SAID IT MANY TIMES THAT YOU'RE NOT A BOTHER TO ME.
ARE YOU AN IDIOT?
WH—WHAT DO YOU PEOPLE WANT!?
SEEMS LIKE BEL IS ALREADY THERE...
GEEZ! DIDN'T THEY JUST OFF SOMEONE THE OTHER NIGHT?
They're asking us to come right away!
C'MON...! THE COURT IS ASKING FOR MORE GUARDS!

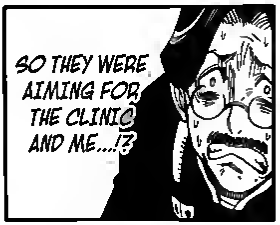
KIDDING..
YOU'RE
AND NOW...
ASHE TALTON'S WITCH TRIAL WILL BEGIN!!
WHY?!
WHAT IS THIS?!
ASHE ISN'T A WITCH!!
YOU HAVE TO HAVE MADE A MISTAKE, SIR BISHOP!!
THEY MADE A FLIMSY DECISION WITH FABRICATED EVIDENCE.
THEY CAN'T DO THIS... I CAN'T WRAP MY HEAD AROUND THIS AT ALL...
THE MEDICINES SHE ADMINISTERS TO OTHERS ARE ACTUALLY POISONS

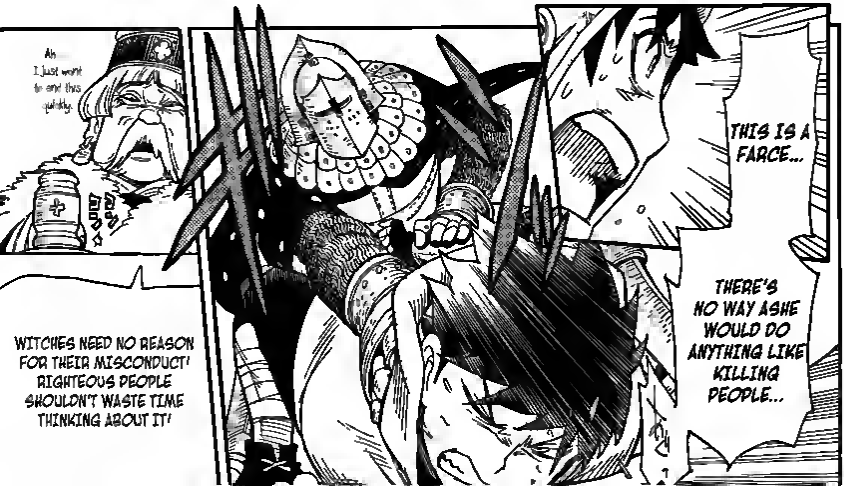
I HAD SUSPECTED THAT GIRL FROM THE START.
TO BEGIN WITH SHE'S AN OUTSIDER ISN'T SHE? SHE JUST WANDERED IN FROM NOWHERE
EVER SINCE SHE CAME THAT PLACE HAS BEEN MAKING A MAJOR PROFIT TOO.
SHE HAS TO HAVE DONE SOMETHING WRONG...
She has scary eyes.
She is a bit cute though.


THE FATHER DAUGHTER TEAM OF THE CLINIC HAS BEEN TESTING THEIR SUSPICIOUS MEDICINES ON PEOPLE. WE HAVE PLENTY OF TESTIMONY HERE
UMM...SO IT SEEMS WE WILL HAVE TO RAISE THE SAME CHARGE AGAINST JOHAN

WHAT'S WITH ALL OF YOU..?
HASN'T SHE DONE ALL KINDS OF GOOD THINGS FOR YOU ALL..?
STOP IT BEL! IF YOU GET INVOLVED IT'LL MEAN TERRIBLE THINGS WILL HAPPEN TO YOU TOO!


IT'S ALL OVER
ROBERT THE BISHOP'S WITCH TRIALS HAVE A 100 PERCENT CONVICTION RATE
WHAT IS...?

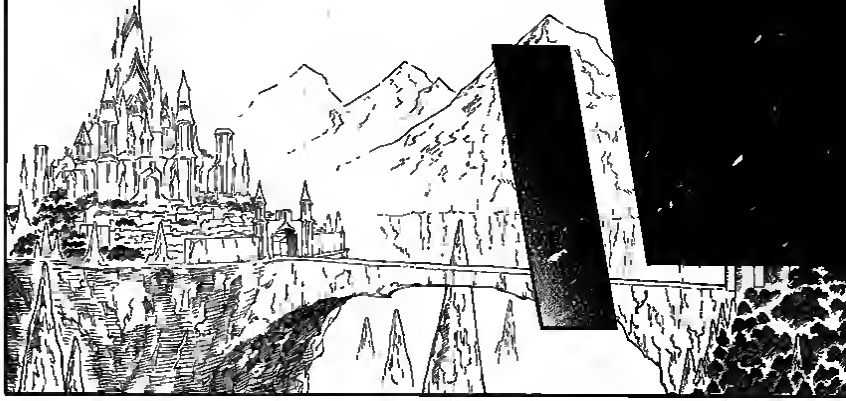

SO THEY WERE AIMING FOR THE CLINIC AND ME....!?


THIS IS A FARCE...
THERE'S NO WAY ASHE WOULD DO ANYTHING LIKE KILLING PEOPLE...
Ah... I just want to end this quickly.
WITCHES NEED NO REASON FOR THEIR MISCONDUCT! RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE SHOULDN'T WASTE TIME THINKING ABOUT IT!

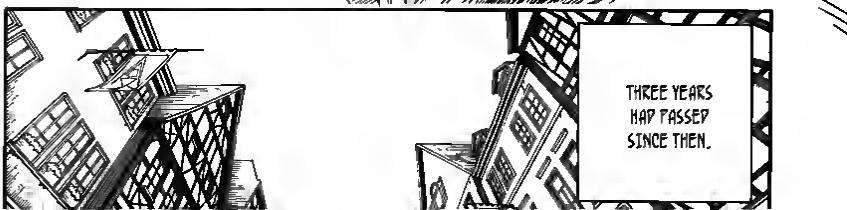
JUST...
ブル
ブル
……!!
STOP THIS...
JIWAAAH
HMZ WHAT'S THAT STENCHZ
??
THE BRUISES...
ARE MOVING...
HIII!?
A BRUISEZ
WHAT IS THATZ
H...HEY LOOK AT THAT GIRLS FACE...

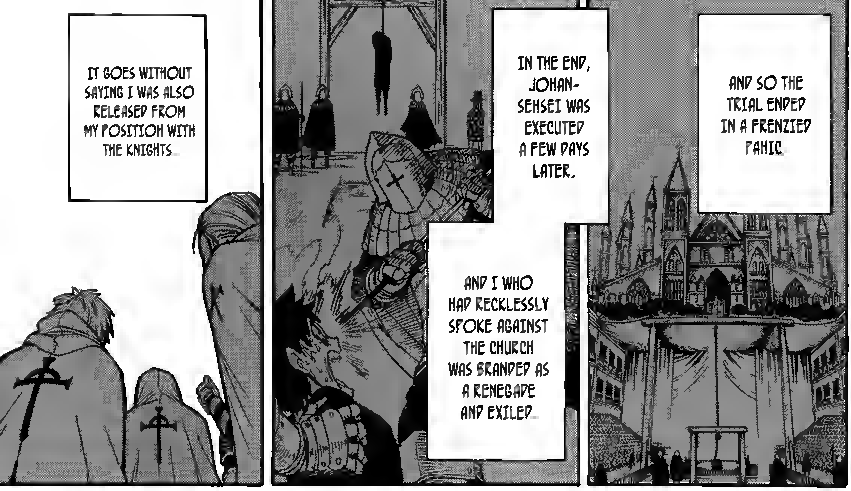
KIKIKIIII
WHA?
WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?!
B-B-B-BISHOP!!
AH...
AH...

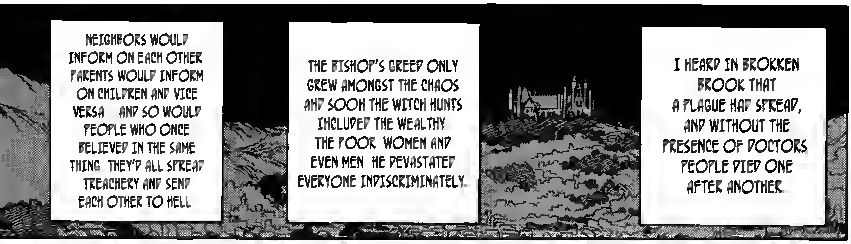
AND ASHE...
BECAME ASHES.
THE ACCUSED, ASHE TALTON...
THIS IS UNMISTAKABLE EVIDENCE OF WITCHERY!!
WILL DIE BY FIREEEEEEEE!!!
DEMONS!!
BLOODY DEMONS!!



MAMA, SOMEONE DREW ON THAT MAN'S FACE!
DON'T LOOK AT HIM!


THREE YEARS HAD PASSED SINCE THEN.

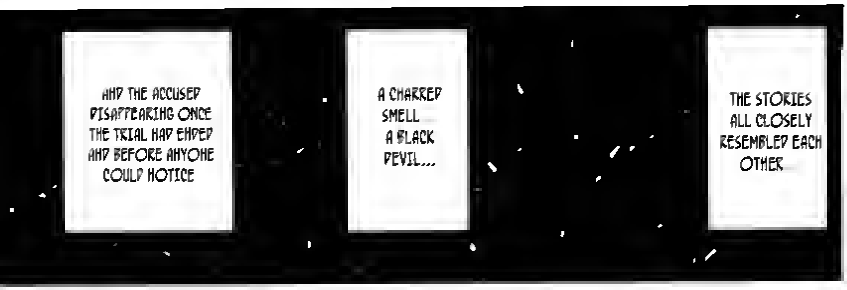

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING I WAS ALSO RELEASED FROM MY POSITION WITH THE KNIGHTS...
IN THE END, JOHAN-SENSEI WAS EXECUTED A FEW DAYS LATER.
AND SO THE TRIAL ENDED IN A FRENZIED PANIC.
AND I WHO HAD RECKLESSLY SPOKE AGAINST THE CHURCH WAS BRANDED AS A RENEGADE AND EXILED...


NEIGHBORS WOULD INFORM ON EACH OTHER PARENTS WOULD INFORM ON CHILDREN AND VICE VERSA... AND SO WOULD PEOPLE WHO ONCE BELIEVED IN THE SAME THING. THEY'D ALL SPREAD TREACHERY AND SEND EACH OTHER TO HELL.
THE BISHOP'S GREED ONLY GREW AMONGST THE CHAOS AND SOON THE WITCH HUNTS INCLUDED THE WEALTHY, THE POOR, WOMEN AND EVEN MEN. HE DEVASTATED EVERYONE INDISCRIMINATELY.
I HEARD IN BROKKEN BROOK THAT A PLAGUE HAD SPREAD, AND WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF DOCTORS, PEOPLE DIED ONE AFTER ANOTHER.

I BEGAN MY DAYS OF DRIFTING AROUND THE CONTINENT AIMLESSLY.
AS IF ENTRANCED, TO PURSUE ASHE'S ASHES...
THAT DAY HAD DONE A NUMBER ON MY SENSE OF REALITY.
I REALLY COULDN'T...
CARE LESS ABOUT ALL OF THAT.

ASHE.
NO MATTER WHERE I WENT, WITCH HUNTS AND TRIALS
AND THE STENCH OF BURNING HUMANS
EACH TIME THEY'D FLOAT UP TO MY EYELIDS
WHY DID SHE HAVE TO BE KILLED...?
WHY?!
ドガッ
WHY WAS I UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING TO SAVE HER....!!?

ABOUT A 'GENUINE WITCH.'
I BEGAN TO HEAR RUMORS FROM CITIES HERE AND THERE...
HOWEVER...
I FOUND MYSELF WONDERING JUST WHAT HAPPENED THEN...?


AND THE ACCUSED DISAPPEARING ONCE THE TRIAL HAD ENDED AND BEFORE ANYONE COULD NOTICE
A CHARRED SMELL... A BLACK DEVIL...
THE STORIES ALL CLOSELY RESEMBLED EACH OTHER.

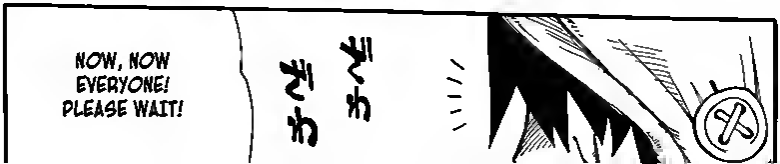
WOW! AS EXPECTED THEY'RE FILLED WITH MEDICAL BOOKS!
SPEAKING OF WHICH...
WHEN I HAD BEEN WAITING AT THE CLINIC...
HM?
COULD ASHE HAVE...
THE CITIZEN'S MEMORIES WERE FOGGY AT BEST.
THEY JUST REMEMBER BEING GRIPPED BY A STRONG FEAR UPON SEEING IT.

THE RELEASE OF A NEUROTOXIN BY PARASITES IN THE BLOOD WHEN THE HOST IS AGITATED BY STRESS...
TARANTERA...
What's that?
WHAT'S WITH THIS SOLEMN LOOKING BOOK...
'SURGERY FOR WITCHES'...?
THE CONTRACTORS ARE MOSTLY WOMEN...
AND THERE IS NO CURE.
THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF 'WITCH' PATHOLOGY...?

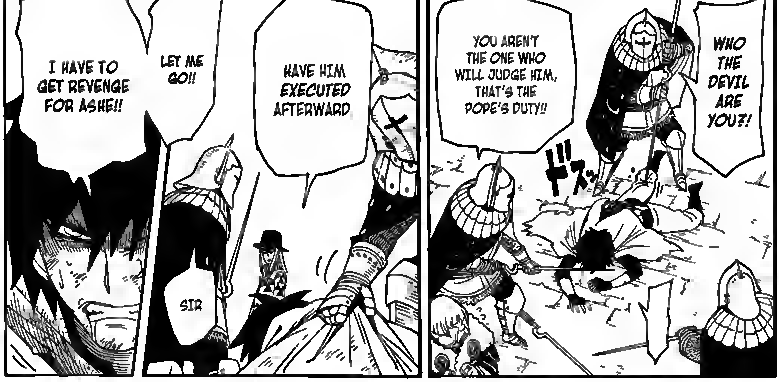
AH! SORRY FOR READING WITHOUT PERMISSION...
Because the medicine you make works so well...
WHOA, HOW SCARY~ COULD YOU BE AN ACTUAL WITCH ASHE?
OH, HEY ASHE.
WHAT IS THIS STUFF?

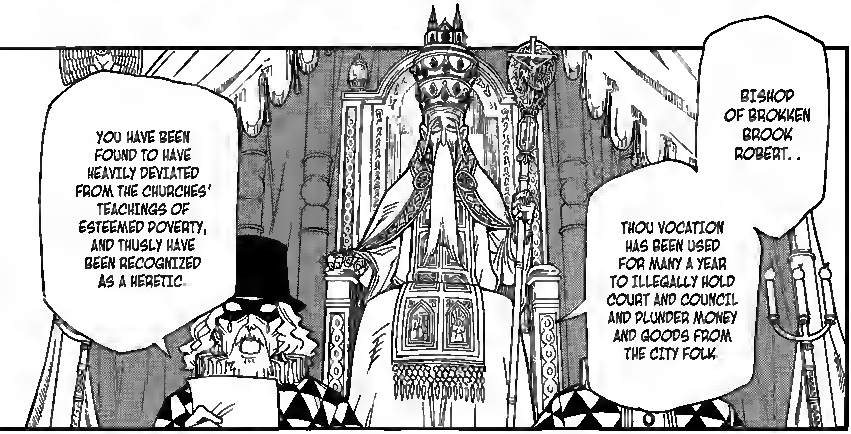
IT DOESN'T MATTER ONE DAMN BIT.
NO.
COULD THAT HAVE BEEN...
BACK THEN HER FACE...

ANYWHERE IN THIS WORLD.
ASHE IS NO LONGER...

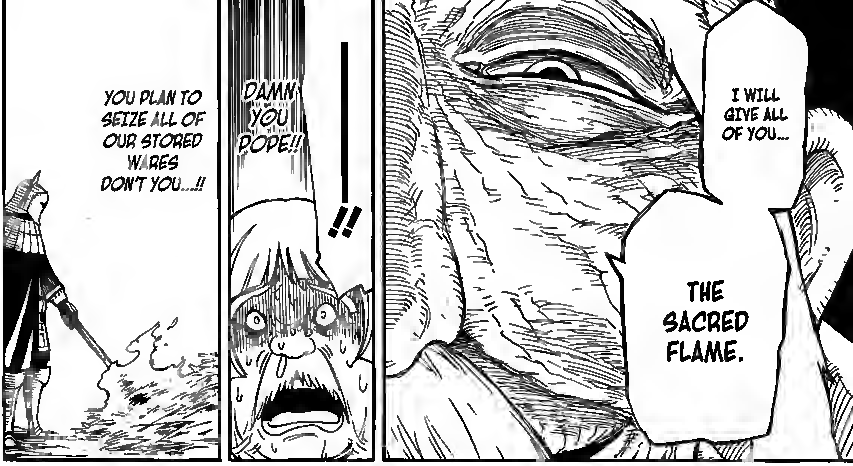

NOW, NOW EVERYONE! PLEASE WAIT!
ざわざわ

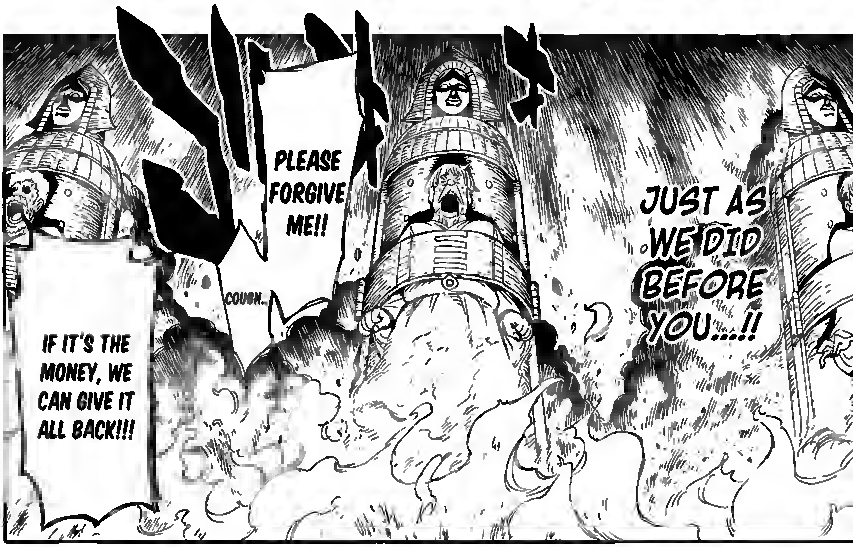
AFTER A LONG RESPITE, THERE WILL FINALLY BE A TRIAL BY FIRE FESTIVAL HERE IN GOD'S CAPITAL QULIQORLI!
THIS TIME THE PRISONER IS NONE OTHER THAN THE BISHOP HIMSELF! HE HAS INVOLVED THE CITY WITH HIS ILLEGAL WITCH HUNTING, AND IT SEEMS FATE HAS DEEMED IT TIME FOR PAYBACK!
GIVE ASHE BAAAAACK!!
HE'S....
LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE'S GETTING THEIR JUST DESERTS!
NGH... WHAT ARE YOU...

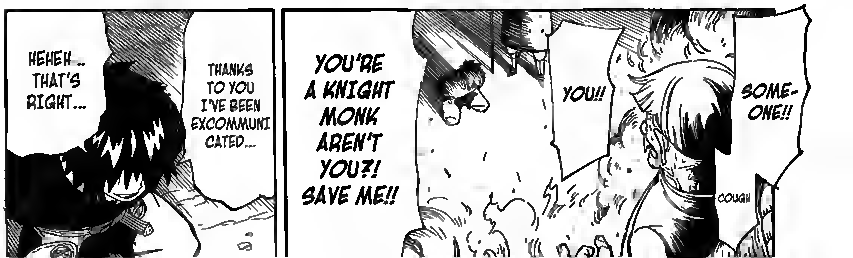

I HAVE TO GET REVENGE FOR ASHE!!
LET ME GO!!
SIR
HAVE HIM EXECUTED AFTERWARD
YOU AREN'T THE ONE WHO WILL JUDGE HIM, THAT'S THE POPE'S DUTY!!
WHO THE DEVIL ARE YOU?!


YOU HAVE BEEN FOUND TO HAVE HEAVILY DEVIATED FROM THE CHURCHES' TEACHINGS OF ESTEEMED POVERTY, AND THUSLY HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED AS A HERETIC.
BISHOP OF BROKKEN BROOK ROBERT. .
THOU VOCATION HAS BEEN USED FOR MANY A YEAR TO ILLEGALLY HOLD COURT AND COUNCIL AND PLUNDER MONEY AND GOODS FROM THE CITY FOLK

I PITY YOU ALL, BEING LURED IN BY THE TEMPTATION OF THE DEVIL AND ALLOWING THAT TO SULLY YOUR BEINGS .
カツン
……!!
TRY AS YOU MIGHT, YOU CANNOT TALK YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS—THE GROSS DECADENCE THAT YOU LIVE IN IS APPARENT.
NO, THIS WAS ALL HIS WILL...!!
THAT'S WRONG YOUR EXCELLENCY THE POPE!
I WAS SIMPLY ACTING ON BEHALF OF THEM...
ALL OF YOU...
HOHO HO...

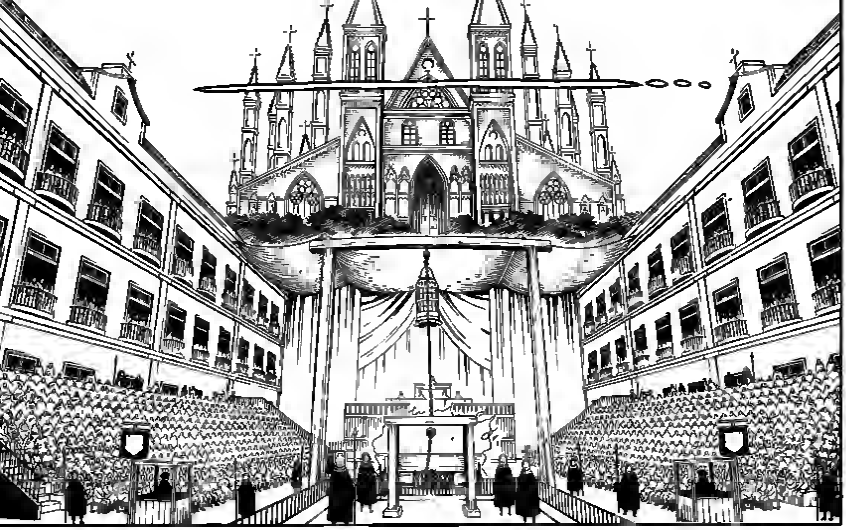

I WILL GIVE ALL OF YOU...
THE SACRED FLAME.
DAMN YOU DOPE!!
!!
YOU PLAN TO SEIZE ALL OF OUR STORED WARES DON'T YOU...!!

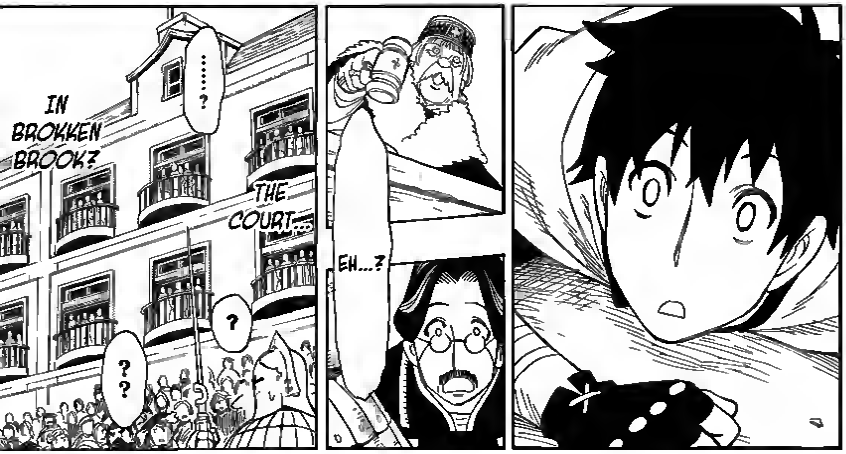

JUST AS WE DID BEFORE YOU...!!
PLEASE FORGIVE ME!!
COUGH...
IF IT'S THE MONEY, WE CAN GIVE IT ALL BACK!!!

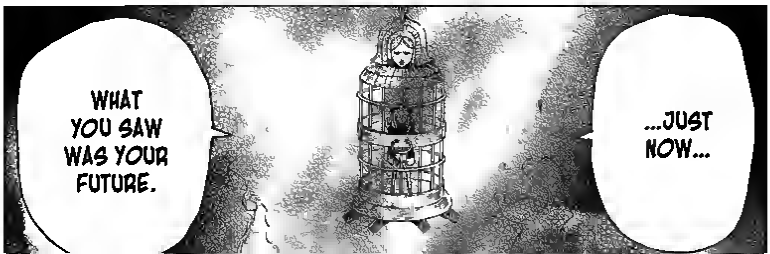

SOME-ONE!!
YOU!!
COUGH
YOU'RE A KNIGHT MONK AREN'T YOU?! SAVE ME!!
THANKS TO YOU I'VE BEEN EXCOMMUNI CATED...
HEHEH... THAT'S RIGHT...

A KNIGHT? I'M SUPPOSED TO BE A KNIGHT?
THAT'S WRONG
I'M NOTHING OF THE SORT...
AFTER ALL...
I COULDN'T PROTECT ANYTHING...
THE BURN FROM 3 YEARS AGO...
SSSSSS
...?
THAT'S...
ENOUGH.
I'M BEGGING ALL OF YOU...
TO STOP THIS.

ASHE...
IMPOS SIBLE!
YOU'RE WITHOUT A DOUBT DEAD....!!!
A...

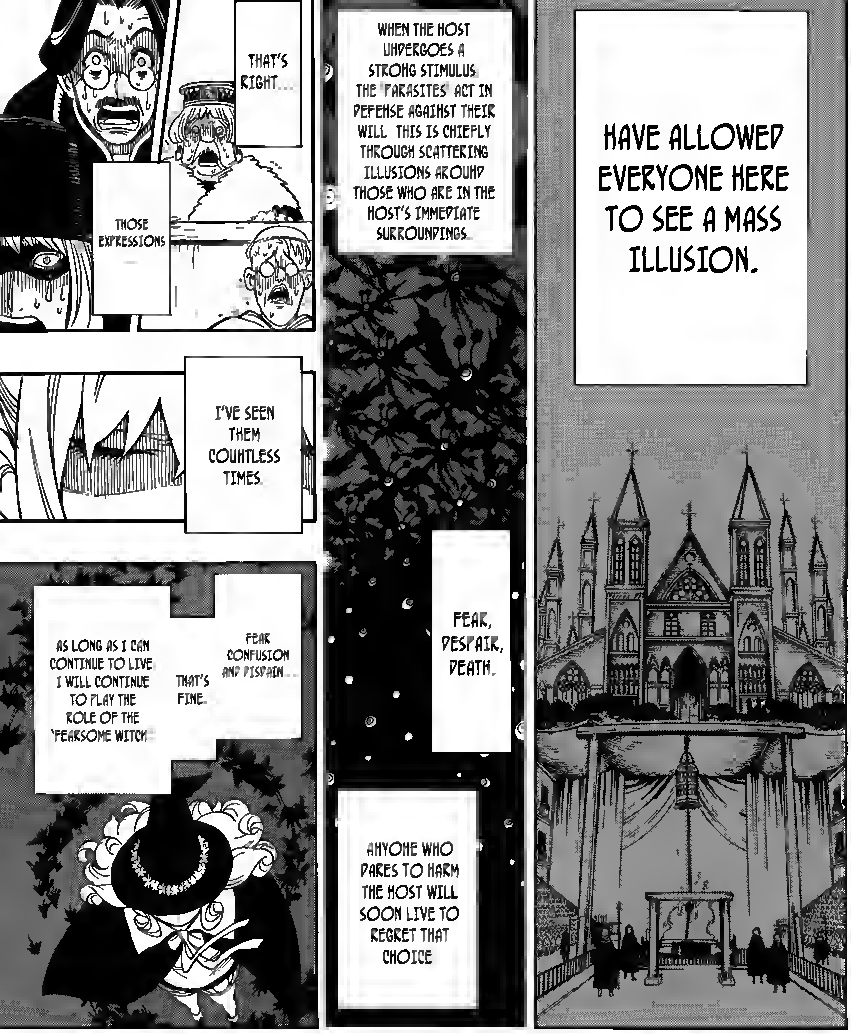


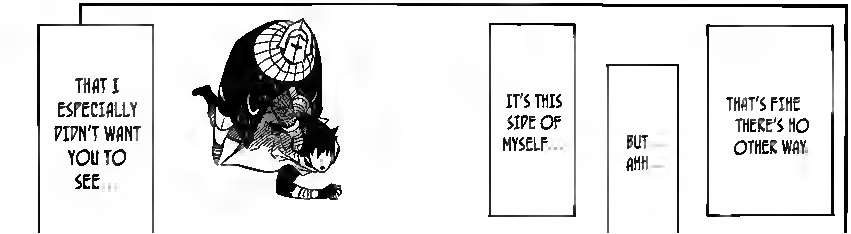

IN BROKKEN BROOK?
.....?
THE COURT...
?
??
EH...?


WHAT YOU SAW WAS YOUR FUTURE.
...JUST NOW...

IF YOU WISH FOR ME... A WITCH TO DIE...
KNOW THAT YOUR FATE TOO WILL BE DEATH.

THE PARASITES THAT LIVE WITHIN AND EAT AT MY BODY...
TARANTERA.
THIS IS MY ACCURSED POWER...


THAT'S RIGHT...
THOSE EXPRESSIONS...
I'VE SEEN THEM COUNTLESS TIMES.
AS LONG AS I CAN CONTINUE TO LIVE I WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY THE ROLE OF THE 'FEARSOME WITCH'...
THAT'S FINE.
FEAR CONFUSION AND DESPAIR...
WHEN THE HOST UNDERGOES A STRONG STIMULUS THE 'PARASITES' ACT IN DEFENSE AGAINST THEIR WILL. THIS IS CHIEFLY THROUGH SCATTERING ILLUSIONS AROUND THOSE WHO ARE IN THE HOST'S IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS...
FEAR, DESPAIR, DEATH.
ANYONE WHO DARES TO HARM THE HOST WILL SOON LIVE TO REGRET THAT CHOICE
HAVE ALLOWED EVERYONE HERE TO SEE A MASS ILLUSION.


THAT I ESPECIALLY DIDN'T WANT YOU TO SEE...
IT'S THIS SIDE OF MYSELF...
BUT... AHH...
THAT'S FINE THERE'S NO OTHER WAY.

WHA...
ASHE!
WHY IS HE MAKING THAT FACE?!
ASHE!!!
THIS PAIN FROM MY BURN... THIS IS PROOF... PROOF THAT DAY THREE YEARS AGO...
IT'S NOT A DREAM...
ジャラ
AH
AWAH!!
CLATTER
WASN'T A DREAM!!
SHFFFT

THIS TIME I SWEAR...
ASHEE EEE!!!
I'LL SAVE YOU!!

THANK GOD...
メラ
メラ
THAT YOU'RE ALIVE ASHE...!!
THANK GOD...
チ
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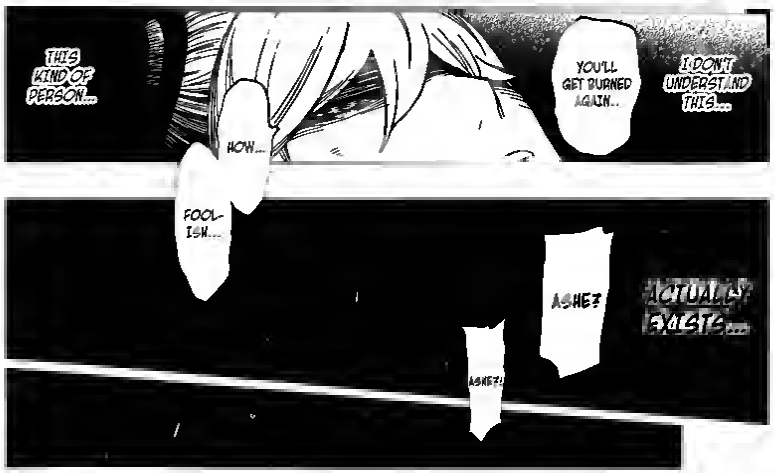
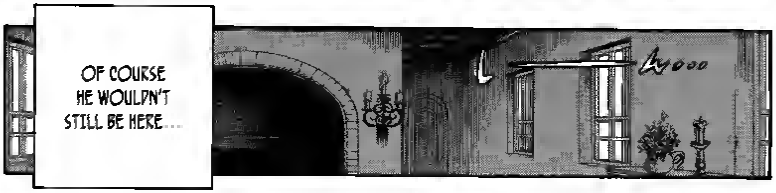
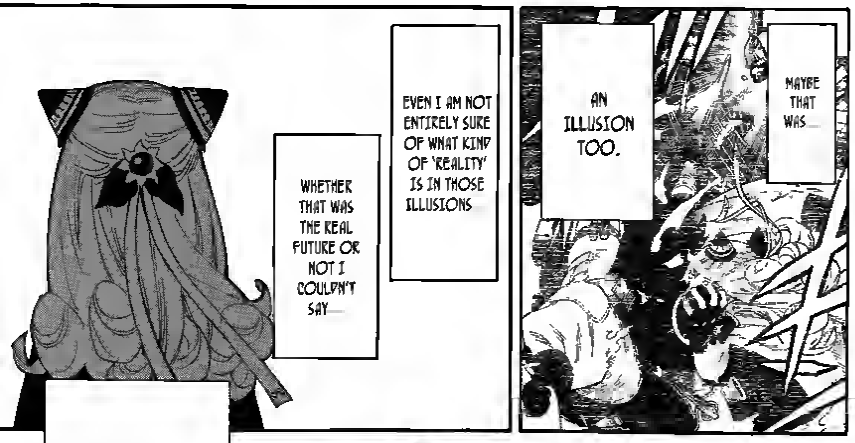

THIS KIND OF PERSON...
HOW...
YOU'LL GET BURNED AGAIN...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS...
FOOL-ISH...
ASHE?
ACTUAL-LY EASIE...
ASHE?!

BEL...?
すぅ
すぅ
すぅ
おく、
THE CLINIC


OF COURSE HE WOULDN'T STILL BE HERE...


EVEN I AM NOT ENTIRELY SURE OF WHAT KIND OF 'REALITY' IS IN THOSE ILLUSIONS
WHETHER THAT WAS THE REAL FUTURE OR NOT I COULDN'T SAY—
AN ILLUSION TOO.
MAYBE THAT WAS...

IT MAY JUST BE A HALLUCINATION INSPIRED BY THIN WISPS OF MEMORY.
Um...

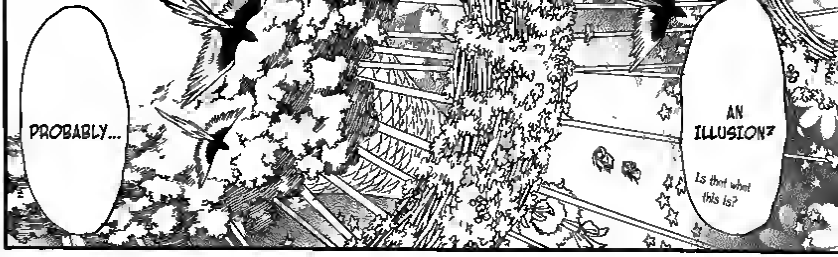
AFTER THIS I'M SURE FEAR OF THE WITCH WILL BE ENGRAVED IN THEIR MINDS.
IT IS THAT GHASTLINESS THAT WILL FUEL THE CONTINUED PERSECUTION OF WITCHES.
AND FROM THERE MORE ILLUSIONS FROM STRESS WILL BE BORN
ギィ…
THIS CITY...
DOESN'T WANT ME HERE ANYMORE EITHER.
THE ILLUSION REPEATS ITSELF AS TIME WAXES LONG AND I CONTINUE TO WANDER IN REALITY'S SOLITUDE
ペコ
ピタ…
THUS...

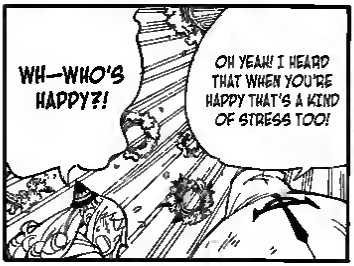
IF YOU'RE PLANNING ON TRAVELING...
FEEL LIKE HIRING A KNIGHT AS YOUR ESCORT?
ARE...
Move!
Cash!
ARE YOU A FOOL?!
HAVE YOU ALREADY FORGOTTEN THE HORRIBLE FUTURE THAT AWAITS YOU IF YOU GET INVOLVED WITH ME?!
Huh!
DIDN'T YOU SEE IT?!
YUP! I TOTALLY FORGOT ABOUT THAT!
I DON'T NEED OR CARE ABOUT A USELESS ILLUSION WHERE YOU DIE ASHE!
BESIDES, I GAVE UP THE WHOLE PILGRIM ASPECT OF MY JOB AND I DON'T HAVE ANYWHERE TO GO!
AND THEN THERE'S THIS BURN OF MINE THAT'LL NEED MORE OF YOUR MEDICINE! IF YOU DON'T MAKE MORE I'LL BE IN SO MUCH PAIN THAT I WON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!
I DON'T CARE!

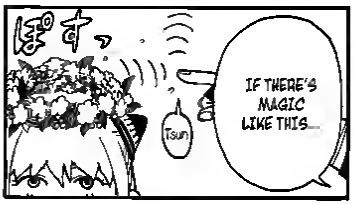
YEAH.
I'M...
A WITCH YOU KNOW!
BUT YOU'VE NEVER GIVEN UP HAVE YOU ASHE?
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A CURE TOO, YEAH?
WHICH IS WHY YOU'RE IN THE CITY RIGHT?
YOU'VE CHOSEN TO BE AROUND PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF THAT.
AND IF A TIME COMES UP WHERE YOUR DISEASE FLARES UP...
IN ANY CASE, I MIGHT BE AN IDIOT BUT I'M WELL PREPARED TO ACCOMPANY YOU.
TO FIND A CURE.
THOUGH I'M AN IDIOT WHO'S ONLY GOT STRENGTH TO BOAST ABOUT.
THEN I'M GOING TO HELP YOU!

FROM EVERYTHING, ASHE!!
AND YOU'RE IN PAIN, THEN I'LL PROTECT YOU...
THE SMELL OF SOMETHING BURNING.... NO WAY—
EH?
SFX- KIWIII
COULD THE IDEA OF ME ACCOMPANYING HER BE A SOURCE OF STRESS TOO?!
AH! UM.. SOR—

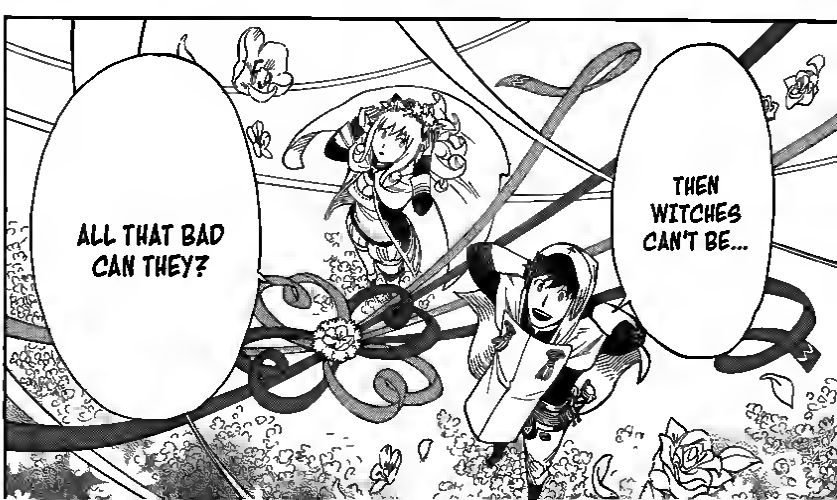
WHAT IS THIS?!
WHA...
DOWAH?!

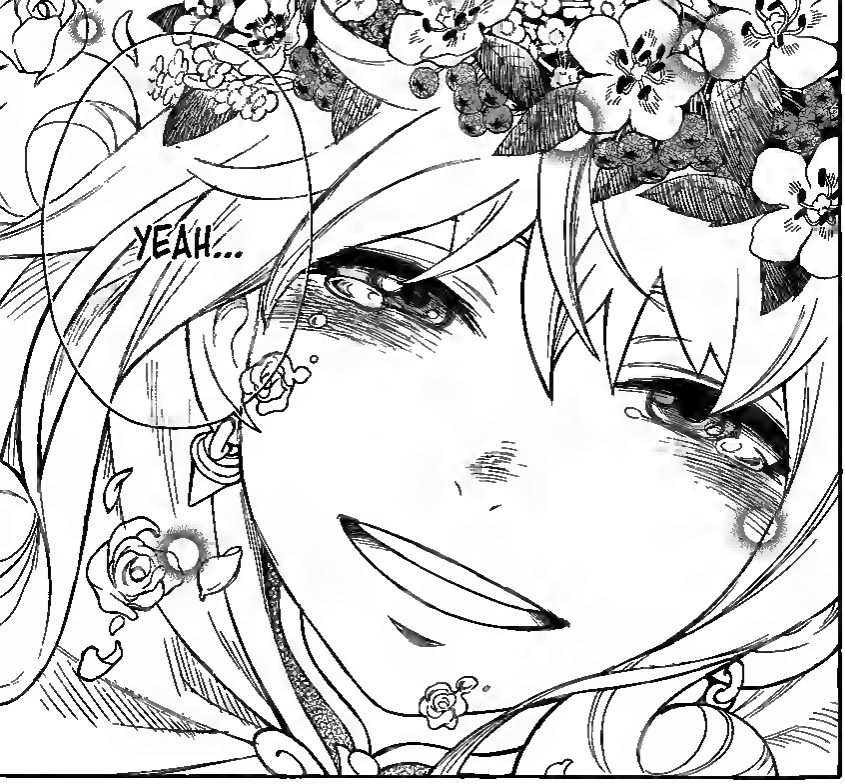

PROBABLY...
AN ILLUSION?
Is that what this is?

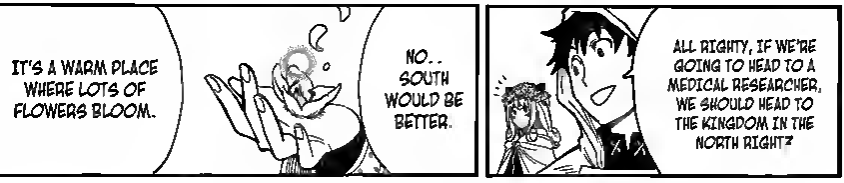

WH—WHO'S HAPPY?!
OH YEAH! I HEARD THAT WHEN YOU'RE HAPPY THAT'S A KIND OF STRESS TOO!

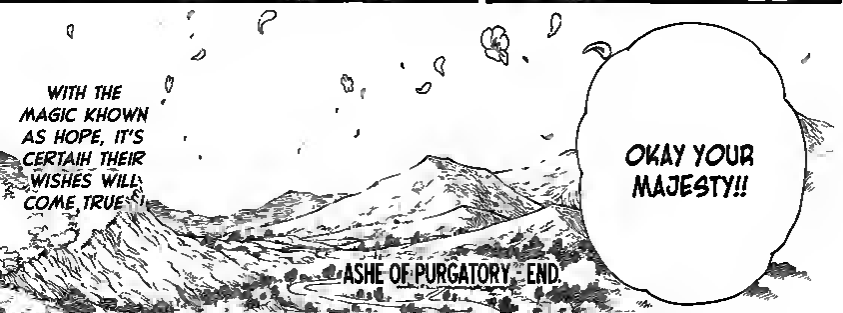

ぽすっ
Tsun
IF THERE'S MAGIC LIKE THIS...

IT'S BEAUTIFUL...
Kii


ALL THAT BAD CAN THEY?
THEN WITCHES CAN'T BE...


YEAH...


IT'S A WARM PLACE WHERE LOTS OF FLOWERS BLOOM.
NO.. SOUTH WOULD BE BETTER.
ALL RIGHTY, IF WE'RE GOING TO HEAD TO A MEDICAL RESEARCHER, WE SHOULD HEAD TO THE KINGDOM IN THE NORTH RIGHT?


WITH THE MAGIC KHOWN AS HOPE, IT'S CERTAIH THEIR WISHES WILL COME TRUE.
OKAY YOUR MAJESTY!!
ASHE OF PURGATORY END.